To: Moore, Kendall[moore.kendall@epa.gov]; Fidis, Alexander[Fidis.Alexander@epa.gov]; Peachey, Robert[peachey.robert@epa.gov]; Ramanauskas, Peter[ramanauskas.peter@epa.gov]; Downey, Scott[Downey.Scott@epa.gov]
Cc: Skadowski, Suzanne[Skadowski.Suzanne@epa.gov]; McArthur, Lisa[McArthur.Lisa@epa.gov]
From: Mullin, Michelle
Sent: Wed 4/13/2016 8:53:58 PM
Subject: RE: Reply to parent at Sky Valley

OK- I plan to send this message by COB today, as a reply is overdue at this point. I will add a

Ex. 5 - Deliberative Process/ACP

Michelle Mullin

PCB Coordinator

US EPA Region 10

1200 6th Avenue |Suite 900 | AWT-150

NOTE NEW MAILING ADDRESS

Seattle, WA 98101

mullin.michelle@epa.gov

206-553-1616

www.epa.gov/region10/pcb.html

From: Moore, Kendall
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2016 12:55 PM
To: Mullin, Michelle <Mullin.Michelle@epa.gov>; Fidis, Alexander <Fidis.Alexander@epa.gov>; Peachey, Robert <peachey.robert@epa.gov>; Ramanauskas, Peter <ramanauskas.peter@epa.gov>; Downey, Scott <Downey.Scott@epa.gov>
Cc: Skadowski, Suzanne <Skadowski.Suzanne@epa.gov>; McArthur, Lisa <McArthur.Lisa@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Reply to parent at Sky Valley

Ex. 5 - Deliberative Process/ACP

From: Mullin, Michelle
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2016 2:00 PM
To: Fidis, Alexander <Fidis.Alexander@epa.gov>; Moore, Kendall <moore.kendall@epa.gov>; Peachey, Robert <peachey.robert@epa.gov>; Ramanauskas, Peter <ramanauskas.peter@epa.gov>; Downey, Scott <Downey.Scott@epa.gov>
Cc: Skadowski, Suzanne <Skadowski.Suzanne@epa.gov>; McArthur, Lisa <McArthur.Lisa@epa.gov>
Subject: Reply to parent at Sky Valley

Hi All-

Kendall/Peter/Bob- I wanted to update you that the inquiry I told you last week that I received from a parent about PCB concerns at their school turns out to be a parent from Sky Valley.

Below is her original message, my reply, and her follow up inquiry.

Ex. 5 - Deliberative Process/ACP

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From: Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2016 1:02 PM
To: Mullin, Michelle <Mullin.Michelle@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: PCB concern

Dear Mrs. Mullin,

Thank you so much for getting back to me so quickly! My children and I attend Sky Valley Education Center in Monroe, WA, and they have told parents that they are working with you through this IAQ investigation.

Some specific questions that I have are:

How reliable are air and wipe samples of an area that has recently had the carpeting (that the ballast dripped on) removed and the area underneath cleaned before the test?

If there have been many ballasts leaking over an extended period of time, how does that affect the surrounding materials?

If a school is in a situation where numerous people are experiencing symptoms associated with PCB's, are air and wipe samples enough, or would you expect to see bulk sampling of the caulk?

The school started their assessment in Jan and we are expecting the results soon. I just think if I have answers to these questions, from a reliable source, than I can be better prepared to evaluated and understand the testing results.

Also, as a PCB coordinator, I don't know how much you deal with mold concerns but I thought I would ask you about their method of testing for mold. They stated that they did not open areas of water damage, look in walls or look in the attic where teachers say it smells musty, as an air fungal sample is sufficient. Then in a recent update they told us, that as they demolished a closet in the library, they found mold at the base of it, but assured us again that mold was not a concern as air samples did not indicate it. In my own limited understanding from just looking things up on line, it seems that air samples may not be sufficient and that visual inspections in and under concerning areas are the most reliable way to check for mold. Given that mold could account for the types of symptoms that many families and teachers are experiencing, would you expect more than air sampling? If this isn't your area, maybe you could direct me to who would know.

I'm just trying to get some professional perspectives to help me understand all this better and help me make the right choice for my children's health.

Thank you so much for your time!

Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

P.S. I'm attaching the document mentioned in my first email, that was concerning.

On Thursday, April 7, 2016 4:15 PM, "Mullin, Michelle" <Mullin.Michelle@epa.gov> wrote:

Hello Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy

Thank you for reaching out to me with your concerns about PCBs in your school. I am very sorry to hear how much stress and angst this is causing you.

You state that a document from 2014 shows 171 PCB light ballasts were removed or cleaned due to leakage, and you ask for my professional opinion about the effect of that many leaking ballasts on air quality. You also state that you are surprised based on the age of the building that the results are not concerning.

First, let me answer your question. Keep in mind that without knowing the school or any particular details, I can only answer generically. There are a lot of factors that affect air quality. Our number one recommendation is to remove PCB fluorescent light ballasts to improve indoor air quality, and also implement Best Management Practices (BMPs). https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-03/documents/practical_actions_for_reducing_exposure_to_pcbs_in_schools_and_other_buildings.pd With that in mind, it sounds like the school is on the right track.

Currently, PCB Fluorescent light ballasts are allowed by law for continued use. If a ballast leaks, then it must be disposed of, and it is no longer allowed to be used. Disposal and cleanup can occur without EPA involvement. Our regulations allow disposal and cleanup to be done directly by the responsible party without applying to EPA or receiving any kind of approval, provided they follow the proper steps. They can verify if cleanup of a leak was successful by taking a wipe sample after cleanup is complete. If you let me know the name of the school, I can check to see if I have any record of this disposal and/or cleanup, but it is likely that I do not. I am happy to look into

this for you though.

Typically, ballasts do not leak all at once. My general knowledge is that building owners identify a leak or two, and decide to remove all PCB ballasts at that time, to prevent future leaks. So, my best guess is that a ballast or two leaked and the school decided to prevent any future leaks by removing all of the ballasts back in 2014, even though the non-leaking ballasts were still allowed by law for continued use. If this is true, then it demonstrates a proactive approach to protecting the health of the people inside the school. The outstanding question is whether or not the cleanup they conducted is complete. It sounds like they collected a lot of samples, so hopefully they have samples demonstrating cleanup of the ballasts was successful.

I will also point out that many of the BMPs we recommend to reduce exposure to PCBs are activities that a school is likely already taking. These include keeping the HVAC system running optimally, cleaning frequently, using wet cloths and mops for cleaning, and a HEPA vacuum. If they are conducting these activities, then they are taking important and significant steps to reducing exposure to PCBs, even if sources of PCBs still exist in the school.

If there are still concerns after these steps have been taken, we recommend indoor air testing. It sounds like the school is conducting many tests, but it is unclear if indoor air testing for PCBs is among those.

I hope this helps, and if you have more questions, please let me know. I am also happy to speak with you about this on the telephone.

Take care,

Michelle Mullin

PCB Coordinator

US EPA Region 10

1200 6th Avenue |Suite 900 | AWT-150

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mullin.michelle@epa.gov

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From: Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy
Sent: Wednesday, April 06, 2016 5:59 PM
To: Mullin, Michelle <Mullin.Michelle@epa.gov>
Subject: PCB concern

Dear Mrs. Mullin,

I'm writing in hopes of some guidance in regards to a PCB concern at my school. I attend a public, parent partnership program with my children in a building mostly constructed in 1967 that has had admittedly poor upkeep and maintenance. There have been many health concerns between teachers and families and the School Board started an official assessment in Jan , where they planned hundreds of tests to do, the results for which, we are sill waiting. We have been told by the school though, that past PCB testing and recent, early warning tests, of PCB have all come back with little to no concern and under acceptable levels. As I was searching school records to view the tests, which all confirm their statements, I also came across a document from 2014 showing that 171 PCB light ballasts were replaced or cleaned due to leakage. This info was surprising but I'm not knowledgeable enough to know how this would affect the environment. In your experience would it be typical that that many leaking ballasts would not effect the air quality to a concerning level? Given the time the building was built and the concern over the caulking as well, I am surprised that test results are not concerning, but I would love nothing more than for this to sound very typical and perhaps illnesses could be linked to another source (many suspect mold).

Thank you in advance for your time and guidance on this. I need to decide whether or not to keep attending, exposing ourselves to the environment while we wait for the official results or to ere on the side of caution and stay away. I'm losing sleep over this, there are so many concerned families that love this program and it's heartbreaking to have our teachers and friends leaving due to illness.

Thank you,

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